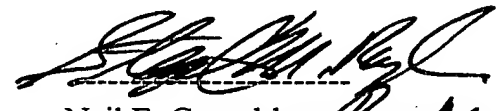


P21701.A03.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees necessary for the consideration of this preliminary amendment to deposit account No. 19-0089.

Should the Examiner have any further comments or questions, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,
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Attachment: Appendices 1-3

APPENDIX 1

Changes to the paragraphs between lines 3-13 on page 1 of the specification:

--CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS--

The present application is a National Stage Application of International Application No. PCT/FR00/01361, filed May 19, 2000. Further, the present application claims priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119 of French Patent Application No. 99/06601 filed on May 20, 1999.

--BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention--

The present invention relates to a flexible container with a sealable closure.

It is particularly adapted to bathers who wish to keep their valuables with them when they engage in nautical activities such as swimming, diving, windsurfing, or the like, but can lend itself to numerous applications in a number of fields whenever a sealed envelope which can be opened and closed as often as possible is desired.

--2. Discussion of Background Information--

A large number of devices adapted to protect objects against water exist currently [exist]. In particular, belts comprising one or a plurality of waterproof compartments are known, but these are relatively expensive and cumbersome systems, the use of which can become generalized only with difficulty.

APPENDIX 2

Changes to the paragraph beginning on line 28 on page 1 and ending on line 1 of page 2 of the specification:

Another patent, No. FR 2 760 949, filed by the same inventor, describes a flattened case that is waterproof, in particular to sea water, which opens by mere pressure on the side ends of the edges causing them to move apart, related to the protection of various objects, such as coins, bank notes, keys, identity papers against water, perspiration, sand, dust, etc., and comprising compressible joints arranged on the inner surface of the edges of the opening, arranged so as to make [said] the case absolutely waterproof when no pressure is exerted, steel strips providing the closing force being incorporated between the walls of the case and the joints.

APPENDIX 3

Changes to the paragraphs beginning on line 6 of page 2 and ending on line 12 of page 4 of the specification:

--SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION--

One of the objects of the present invention is to remedy this disadvantage. Indeed, it makes it possible to make bags or wallets of all types and sizes, with an absolutely waterproof closure.

[It is constituted of] The invention therefore provides for an envelope with impermeable walls, open at its upper portion and comprising two rigid parallel bars which can fit tightly around the edges of the opening in order to seal it, at least one of these bars being fixed to a closure flap of the envelope, [means] a system for locking the envelope in a tight position [being] is arranged at both ends of these bars.

The invention provides for a flexible container with a sealable closure, particularly adapted to bathers who wish to keep their valuables with them when they engage in nautical activities, but can lend itself to numerous applications in a number of fields whenever a sealed envelope which can be opened and closed as often as possible is desired, characterized in that it is constituted of an envelope with impermeable walls, open at its upper portion and comprising two rigid parallel bars which can fit tightly around the edges of the opening in order to seal it, at least one of these bars being movable, a system for locking in tight position being arranged at both ends of these bars.

The rigid bars may be mounted on a system of hinges or journalled arms guaranteeing a correct position before tightening. The device may include a closure flap of the envelope to which at least one of the rigid bars is fixed, the second rigid bar being capable of being fixed either to the flap, or to the rear outer surface of the wall of the envelope. The locking

elements may be constituted of foldable tongues fixed to the flap or to the journal system of the rigid bars, and provided with cutouts confining the ends of the bars. The locking elements may be constituted of elastic lugs affixed to one of the rigid bars and locking on the second when it is sufficiently close. The inner surface of the edges of the opening may include at least one glued or fixed compressible joint, which is pressed against the second joint or against the opposite edge at the time of closure of the envelope. The edges of the envelope may be stiffened by way of strips made of metal or synthetic materials. The device may be able to float due to a double wall filled with air or gas. The envelope may include lateral bellows. The device may include waterproof pockets on containers which themselves may or may not be waterproof.

The invention also provides for a flexible container with a sealable closure system comprising an envelope type enclosure having impermeable walls, an opening being defined at an upper portion of the enclosure, two rigid bars being configured to tightly engage edges of the opening in order to seal the enclosure closed, at least one of the two rigid bars being movable, and a system for locking the two rigid bars together, wherein the system for locking the two rigid bars together engages the two rigid bars at both ends of the rigid bars.

The flexible container may be adapted to store valuables in a nautical environment. The flexible container may be adapted to be opened and closed often. The two rigid bars may be arranged parallel to one another. Each of the two rigid bars may be movably mounted to the enclosure and are each configured to be correctly positioned adjacent an edge of the enclosure before tightening. The flexible container may further comprise a flap. At least one of the rigid bars may be coupled to the flap. The other of the two rigid bars may be coupled to one of the flap and an outer surface of one of the impermeable walls. The system for locking the two rigid bars together may comprise at least one of locking elements and foldable tongues. The system for locking the two rigid bars together may comprise

foldable tongues, each foldable tongue having an opening that is sized to confine one end of each of the two rigid bars. The system for locking the two rigid bars together may comprise locking members, each locking member having an opening that is sized to confine one end of each of the two rigid bars. The system for locking the two rigid bars together may comprise elastic lugs, each elastic lug having a projection which releasably engages one end of at least one of the two rigid bars. The system for locking the two rigid bars together may comprise elastic lugs, each elastic lug having one end that is attached to one of the two rigid bars and another end which releasably engages one end of the other of the two rigid bars.

The flexible container may further comprise a compressible member arranged on an inner surface of at least one of the edges of the opening. The flexible container may further comprise a compressible member arranged on an inner surface of each of the edges of the opening. Each compressible member may be attached to the edges by one of gluing and fixing. The compressible members may be configured to movably engage each other when the enclosure is opened and closed. The compressible members may be arranged opposite one another.

The edges may be configured to be stiffened by strips made of a metal or a synthetic material. The flexible container may be adapted to at least one of trap air or gas and to float. The impermeable walls may be deformable. The flexible container may further comprise a flap having a mechanism for releasably securing the flap on one of the impermeable walls.

The invention also provides for a flexible container with a sealable closure system comprising an envelope type enclosure having impermeable walls, an opening being defined at an upper portion of the enclosure, two rigid bars being configured to tightly engage edges of the opening in order to seal the enclosure closed, one of the two rigid bars being positioned against one of the impermeable walls when the enclosure is closed, another of the two rigid bars being positioned against another of the impermeable walls when the enclosure

is closed, and a system for locking the two rigid bars together, wherein the system for locking the two rigid bars together engages the two rigid bars.

The invention still further provides for a flexible container with a sealable closure system comprising an envelope type enclosure having impermeable walls and a flap, an opening being defined at an upper portion of the enclosure, two rigid bars being configured to tightly engage edges of the opening in order to seal the enclosure closed, one of the two rigid bars being positioned against one of the impermeable walls when the enclosure is closed, another of the two rigid bars being positioned against another of the impermeable walls when the enclosure is closed, and a system for locking the two rigid bars together, wherein the system for locking the two rigid bars together engages the two rigid bars, wherein at least one of the rigid bars is coupled to the flap, and wherein the other of the two rigid bars is coupled to one of the flap and an outer surface of one of the impermeable walls.

--BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS--

In the [annexed] drawings, there is provided [by way of] non-limiting examples of embodiments of the [object of the] invention, in which:

[Figure] Fig. 1 shows an isometric perspective of an open wallet comprising only one sealing joint[,];

[Figure] Fig. 2 shows an end view of the same wallet, closed along the arrow F1 of [the previous Figure,]Fig. 1;

[Figure] Fig. 3 is a transverse vertical cross-section of a wallet identical to that of [Figure] Fig. 1, but comprising two sealing joints[,];

[Figure] Fig. 4 shows the wallet of [Figure] Fig. 3, closed, under the same conditions[,];

[Figure] Fig. 5 is an enlargement of the detail D1 of [Figure 4,]Fig. 4; and

[Figure] Fig. 6 shows a top view of an example of a locking system of the closure.

--DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION--

The device[, Figures] shown in Figs. 1-6[, is constituted of] includes an envelope 1 comprising a top opening 2 formed of two edges joined at their ends, a front end 3 and a rear end 4, this opening 2 being capable of being closed by [means] way of a flap 5 fixed to the rear wall of the envelope 1.

The opening 2 can be sealed by [means] way of two rigid parallel bars 6, 7, made of metal or reinforced plastic, arranged so as to be able to compress the ends or edges 3, 4, against one another. The front bar 6 is movable and fixed to the inner surface of the flap 5 by any adequate [means] methods, whereas the rear bar 7 can be fixed either to the flap 5, or to the rear outer surface of the rear wall of the envelope 1.

When the flap 5 is lifted, the front bar 6 is moved apart from the rear bar 7 and releases the opening 2 allowing access to the inside of the device 1. When it is folded back, the front bar 6 positions itself against the front edge 3 of the opening 2, facing the rear bar 7. The waterproofness is obtained by manually pressing the two bars 6, 7 against one another, and by maintaining them in this position due to locking elements arranged at the ends of these bars 6, 7. By way of example, these elements can be constituted of foldable tongues 8 fixed to the flap 5 and provided with cutouts [confining] 8a which are sized to confine the ends of the bars 6, 7. They can also be constituted of elastic lugs [10] 9 affixed to one of the bars, e.g., 6, and locking on the second bar 7 when it is sufficiently close, the opening 2 occurring by pressing on the lug 9 to move it apart from the end of the bar 7 (arrow F2, [Figure] Fig. 6). Any other system can also be used insofar as it fulfils the same functions. In particular, a lock device can be used.

The wall of the envelope 1 can be made out of any material or materials, but a waterproof material is [preferably used] preferable, such as flexible plastics, rubber, or elastomer. When the texture of the envelope wall does not make it possible to obtain a good

waterproofness, one can provide on the inner surface of the edges 3 or 4 of the opening 2 at least one glued or fixed compressible joint 10, which is pressed against the second joint 10' or against the opposite edge at the time of closure of the envelope 1.

For large sized constructions, the edges 3, 4 of the envelope 1 can be stiffened by [means] way of strips made of metal or synthetic material (not shown).

The container [which is the object] of the invention can be in numerous forms and sizes, from [the] a wallet to [the] a sea bag, handbag, backpack, school satchel. It can be used to obtain waterproof pockets on bags which themselves may or may not be waterproof, it can comprise lateral bellows or can be provided with a double wall filled with air or gas enabling the device to float.

It must be noted that the envelope 1 can be used as required with or without waterproofness, depending upon whether or not the locking [means] systems 8, 9 are used.

The bars 6, 7 can possibly be mounted on a system of hinges or journalled arms guaranteeing a correct position before tightening. For certain alternative embodiments, this arrangement makes it possible to eliminate the flap 5, the locking [means] systems 8, 9 being fixed in this case to these hinges or journalled arms.

The positioning of the various constituent elements gives the [object of the] invention a maximum of useful effects which had not been previously obtained by similar devices.